

About Japan

Japan Society
(New York, N.Y.).



FRANKLIN
PAMPHLET BINDER
Manufactured by
GAYLORD BROS. Inc.
Syracuse, N. Y.
Stockton, Calif.

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About Japan

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25 WEST 43D STREET, NEW YORK

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OCT. 1920

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October 1920, Bulletin

As for the charge that Japanese men of business are sharp and untrustworthy, "forget it!" It is not so. The Japanese business men are not as frank as we are. They want to be, but don't know how. For generations they have been taught reserve. It is bred in the bone and in the flesh. But I want no honester person to deal with than the Japanese business man.—Thomas W. Lamont.

Japan's Problem

The fundamental Japanese problem, out of which all other Japanese problems in which other nations are interested grow, is the immediate one of the food supply of a rapidly increasing population. The Japanese nation is confined to a comparatively small group of islands, mountainous in character, with not over ten or twelve per cent of the area capable of agricultural development. Fifty years ago the population of Japan was less than 33,000,000. To-day it is more than 57,000,000. There has been an increase in these five decades of more than seventy-five per cent; but there has been no increase in the arable land of the country. Agriculture is carried on with an astounding intensity. Mountain foothills are terraced to their summit. Irrigating waters have been led, at an enormous expenditure of labor and with great ingenuity, over steep hillsides. Almost everything is done by hand labor and with what we would regard as crude appliances. Where we sow fields of wheat broadcast and harvest with self-binders, the Japanese on infinitesimal plots prepare the ground with infinite labor, plant the wheat in neat rows, remove every weed by hand, harvest with a sickle, and thresh out the grain as they did a thousand years ago. This is not because their agricultural methods are backward, but because in these tiny fields, if the utmost possible results are to be secured, each field must be cultivated as we cultivate benches in a greenhouse. When all that is done, the nation is still short of food, and there are 600,000 additional mouths to feed each year. It is these 600,000 additional mouths; it is 57,000,000 insistent stomachs, that make up the true Japanese problem.

—Frank A. Vanderlip in the *Outlook*.

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The Influence of the Military

An American's View

Japan to-day is commercially under a handicap which I should hardly attempt to analyze if it had not been done for me by the Japanese themselves. This handicap is the policy of the so-called Military Party which, of recent years, has been so strong as almost to constitute an actual super-government. There are two schools of thought in Japan and the cleavage is a deep one. In general the men of affairs—manufacturers, great merchants and bankers—are liberal in their ideas. They believe, as we do here in America, that a nation's development, to be sound and sure, must be along lines of peaceful trade and the cultivation of good will.

The other party in Japan, the Militarists, have a different philosophy. They might not admit it, but if you study their actions you will realize that they still think the world is ruled by force rather than by ideas. They believe in a mighty army and navy. They are sincerely convinced that Japan's safety and future lie in having a dominating influence on the Continent of Asia.

—Remarks of Thomas W. Lamont before American Manufacturers' Export Association

A Japanese View

On the face of things there undoubtedly have been certain developments which might lead to a belief in the power of Japan's military men. It is true that Japanese military and naval men have taken decisive and policy-making action abroad, but this has not been due to the influence of the military leaders in politics in Tokyo. This has been due to the fact that no Japanese Cabinet of recent times has had a comprehensive and clearly defined foreign policy. In the absence of such a policy, military commanders on the scene of action have had to act simply in accordance with the orders of their immediate superior officers, who, in turn, lacking definite instructions from the Government, have had to make such decisions as would take care of day-to-day developments. The men on the ground, often puzzled as to the wishes of the Cabinet, have had to act on their own decisions and their own responsibility.

In the absence of a general foreign policy for the Cabinet, the Army, the Navy and the Foreign Office each has had its own policy, and the Army and Navy, on the scene of action, have often acted contrary to the wishes of the Foreign Office. Such incidents lead to the conclusion that Japan is ruled by militarists, but he who judges from such evidence reaches a mistaken judgment. To reveal the defects of the Japanese Government in this manner is not pleasant, but in order to prevent misconceptions of Japanese policy by foreigners it is necessary that the real situation shall be known. Knowing all the facts, the impartial judge must realize that Japan is not a militaristic nation.

—I. Inukai, leader of the Kokuminto, one of Japan's political parties.

The Theatre of Japan

What is more interesting in the theatrical world to-day than the art of the Japanese actor and his love for the uncommon! He has a style of self-expression not to be seen in Western countries, his singularity of movement being an astonishment to all Western amusement seekers. He appears stilted and unnatural, like a creature on wires. This may be explained by the fact that the first Japanese actors simply tried to imitate the amusing antics of the puppets of the old Osaka stage who moved mechanically and acted their parts to the accompaniment of what was called music, together with a song, which explained the meaning of the action and expressed the mind of the participants. That sort of thing was supposedly more amusing to the audience than natural action, because it betrayed a love for the artificial and the grotesque that is very remarkable in a people like the Japanese, who are nature lovers and reveal this spirit in all their highest art.

On the Japanese stage the actors are of the people before whom they act and they represent the mind of the audience. They freely move about among the onlookers and make no effort to appear other than as they are. The scene is among and of the people who have come to listen and see, and is part of human life as they know it.

The scenic accessories of the Japanese stage are of the simplest sort, being mostly of painted cardboard, and the beginning of a play or a change of scene is announced by clapping together two pieces of wood, which are further used to accompany exciting moments in the play. Foreigners as a rule do not care for this noisy accompaniment, but surely it is no worse than the bones, cymbals and drums of a Western orchestra.

Japanese drama still clings to the past and tends to concentrate the mind of the nation on its ancestors. Drama which looks toward the future and fills the mind with prophecy is not to be found to a great extent, though some writers of a radical turn are appearing. Translations of Western plays, too, are influencing the native stage, and the interest of foreigners is increasing, which may tend to bring the East and West into a closer mental relationship.

Note to Members

Some 600 individuals, or about 50% of the membership of the Japan Society, paid their annual dues within one month after the time the bills were sent out. When it is considered that the membership includes people living all over the United States and even in foreign countries it would appear that the activities of the Society are a source of keen interest to its members.

Do It Now!

If you are contemplating going to the Orient, visit the Japan Society and secure any or all of the following booklets which have recently been received from the Japan Tourist Bureau: Japan, Chosen, Hotels in Japan, Keijo, Fusan.

Japan's "Diplomacy of Necessity"

Japan's "Diplomacy of Necessity" is reflected in the views, parts of which follow, of two keen observers of the Orient. The first view is found in an editorial that appears in the *Japan Advertiser*, an American-owned paper published in Tokio; the other comes from an article in the *London Times*.

Japan's Diplomacy of Necessity

Japan's "diplomacy of necessity" is the fundamental fact of all her policies. Mr. Vanderlip and Mr. Bland are agreed on that. They emphasize her need for expansion. Her people are increasing in numbers more rapidly than any other people in the world. (Some of the Balkan states formerly equalled Japan in fertility but war has rudely arrested the process.) Her soil, intensively cultivated to a high pitch, cannot much longer support them. They are debarred from emigrating where they might thrive and permitted to emigrate where they cannot thrive. The empty or half-empty temperate new countries which the white man has pre-empted as homes for his civilization are locked and bolted against Asian emigrants. There is no hope that the bars will be let down within any future that we can reasonably anticipate. Japan herself perceives and acknowledges the hard logic of facts and disclaims any intention of thrusting her emigrants on lands where it is only too clear they will not be allowed to settle, as things are in the world at present. This situation is in part the creation of the white man's necessities, and Japan therefore has a moral claim that he shall not interfere with her expansion into regions where it does not conflict with his own vital interests.

But Japan cannot emigrate to Asia where the doors are open. She is met there with prohibitions no less strong than those which debar her from California and Australia. In whatever part of the Asiatic mainland she goes she finds the Chinese emigrant competing with hers and beating them exactly as her emigrants compete with and beat the white man in California. The only solution therefore seems to be that Japan should become the workshop of Asia just as Britain, a century ago in somewhat similar conditions, became the workshop of the world. But England was rich in many respects in which Japan is poor. She had priceless deposits of coal and iron. She was a generation ahead of the rest of the world in steam and machinery. Her population had the qualities that enabled them rapidly to acquire industrial efficiency, and her bankers and merchants were unsurpassed. Japan is not in anything like so favorable a position. She lacks raw material; she has not yet trained her population to more than moderate skill in industry; she is not leading the world in new inventions, and she does not stand almost alone in respect of competition. The inference which we are expected to draw from these facts is that the rest of the world should stand aside, so far at least as China is concerned, and should recognize in Japan's necessity her prior claim to utilize the raw materials and supply the markets of that country.

—*Japan Advertiser*, July 22, 1920.

Fundamental Needs and Purposes of Japan

Beyond all question, the salvation of China and the peace of the Orient depend to a very great extent upon a clearer appreciation of the fundamental needs and purposes of Japanese policy and of the economic pressure behind it. If the steadily growing force of Liberalism in Japan were encouraged and strengthened the power of the military party at Tokio would be undermined and a solution found for all outstanding questions even for the problem for the "open door."

No charge has been more frequently made against Japan in recent years than that of being irretrievably addicted to militarism; yet any one who knows anything of the Japanese people and its history knows that the charge is unfounded, and that Japan is no more likely to go to war for war's sake than is England or France.

The conception of Japan as an aggressive militarist nation owes much of its origin, no doubt, to the Government's policy toward China. If those who criticize that policy would differentiate between it and the country's imperative economic necessities, they would be compelled to make more allowance than they usually do for the absence of altruism and lofty idealism in Oriental statecraft. For a nation to claim the right to expansion in a spirit of wanton aggression is one thing; to do so under the compulsion of a fierce struggle for bare existence, for food and elbow-room, is merely to obey the first law of nature, as every active self-helping race has obeyed it since the beginning of time.

The problem which Japan faces is merely a question of providing food for a population which already exceeds the limit which the country's soil can support, and which is debarred by our exclusion acts from seeking relief in the least populated regions of the American and Australian continents.

The elemental facts of the Japanese situation are (1) that, with a birth-rate of 32 per thousand, the population increases every year by about 750,000; (2) that in the last ten years the inhabitants of Japan proper (excluding Korea and Formosa) have increased from 50 to 57 millions, which gives an average of 380 persons to the square mile; (3) that during this period the area of land under cultivation has been increased by 5 per cent, and the rice production by 4 per cent, as against an increase of 12 per cent in the number of mouths to feed.

There are three solutions: (1) A reduction of the birth-rate; (2) increase of food supplies to be obtained by means of industrial expansion, and (3) territorial expansion into the less populated regions of the Asiatic continent.

Here you have in a nutshell the explanation of all Japan's diplomatic and aggressive activities in the Far East; of her feverish eagerness to secure permanent sources of supply of raw materials on which her industries depend; of her claims to "special interests" in the undeveloped regions of Manchuria, Mongolia and Eastern Siberia. In a word, Japan is overcrowded and must overflow just as Great Britain and other congested countries have overflowed.

Experience in Korea and Manchuria has led the Japanese to perception of the fact that they are not a colonizing race in the sense that

the Anglo-Saxons are; secondly, the rapid growth of unmistakable hostility to Japan in China, threatening Japanese commerce at its most vital point, gives pause to a policy of aggression. For these and other reasons the Government's original idea of Eastern Asia as a wide field for Japanese emigration has come to be replaced by a policy of commercial and industrial expansion which shall feed Japan's home industries, much as India feeds those of Great Britain.

—A writer in the *London Times*.

Democracy vs. Bureaucracy

The view that Japan is engaged in a struggle between an inherited and entrenched militarism and a rising democracy is now fashionable. Many Japanese believe in it; it is a natural first impression of foreigners who see a loud agitation for universal suffrage and read newspaper criticisms of bureaucracy and militarism.

The difference between the liberals of Japan—the Kanekos and Shibusawas—and the democrats of Western countries is that the former cherish a personal belief in and liking for the liberal, the peaceful, and humane way in politics, but except for the exercise of their personal influence in a private way their democratic creed remains a pious aspiration. Japanese liberals, with few exceptions, are not in politics. Baron Shibusawa is not even a member of the House of Peers. No question is ever taken to the country as Gladstone, for example, time after time took moral questions of foreign policy. The unanswered question of Japanese politics is how this liberal sentiment which exists proposes to influence the conduct of government.

What Western nations need to understand about Japan is that she is not a country which has performed the impossible feat of assimilating foreign political forms but an Oriental country which has preserved her old national forms of government while freely adapting the industrial methods of Western civilization. The weakness of Japan's present system is the preponderant strength of the military party, but that is an inherited matter and rapid and radical changes cannot be expected. The best way to influence Japan toward a liberal policy is for foreign countries themselves to follow policies of peace which will show to all of the Japanese people that representative government can in fact do as much for a country and more than government by soldiers and bureaucrats.

—From the *Japan Advertiser*.

Comfort for Travellers

Good news! Thirty-seven new passenger coaches are now under construction for use on the express trains between Tokio and Shimonoseki. These cars represent one of the first steps taken by the Railway Department toward promoting the comfort and convenience of the passengers.

It has been whispered that the new cars will be larger and have less noise and vibration than the old ones.

The Eastern Question

There is no excuse for founding an opinion about the Eastern question upon petty testimony, or indeed upon any testimony; it ought to be an opinion founded upon fundamental facts. It is absurd to listen to bickerings when the map and knowledge of economic laws are available.

One of these facts, never quoted, available to every one, seen and weighed by almost nobody, can be found by contemplating any good map. It is this—from the Pacific Coast to far west of the extremities of China the wandering finger can find but one self-governing people. There are territories and races held together from anarchy by Occidental guidance—India, the Philippines, and on, and on. There are territories in a wallow of civil strife, disorder, revolution, chaos, and utter misery of millions—China, Russia, and on, and on. But in all this space, comprising more than half the population and territory of the globe, there is not a single self-governing constructive civilization but one, and that one is Japan.

—Richard Washburn Child in *The World's Work*.

That Immigration Question

The Japanese have a sincere and intense desire for the abiding friendship of our country, and no American can be long in Japan without warmly reciprocating that desire. There is every reason why the two nations should be on the closest and friendliest footing. Even the perplexing immigration question is susceptible of amicable settlement if only we Americans show a little tact and a respect for Japanese susceptibilities. The Japanese are one of the most ancient and proudest people on the earth. Their manners to foreign visitors are a revelation of grace and courtesy. They expect in return a little of that same deportment. It isn't so much what we do on the immigration question, as the way we do it. Certainly to one who has gained an intimate glimpse of the Japanese, it would seem certain that, with any ingenuity at all, we ought to be able to devise a formula that would meet the views of California and at the same time measurably satisfy the Japanese.

—Remarks of Thomas W. Lamont before American Manufacturers' Export Association.

Will the Next Step be Suffrage?

Japan is not yet wide-awake, for her women are still denied political rights and freedom. Such a state of affairs is quite anachronistic in this stage of the world's development and should be immediately rectified, said the leader of a group of women which recently sat in the visitors' gallery of the Diet. The first step toward this equalization was then made in their presence through the introduction of a bill to annul an article of the police peace regulations which prohibits women from attending political meetings.

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Oct 1920

